



Environment Department

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NEWS RELEASE

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NMED's mission is to protect and restore the environment and to foster a healthy and prosperous New Mexico for present and future generations.

New Mexico Reminds Animas River Water Users To Stop Taking Water From Animas River During EPA Gold King Mine toxin spill

(Santa Fe)—The New Mexico Environment Department and the New Mexico Office of the State Engineer remind water users along the Animas River to stop taking water from the Animas River during the EPA Gold King Mine Spill that released about one million gallons of contaminated water into a tributary of the Animas River in Colorado on Wednesday.

“We have successfully reached out to the communities, water systems, and other stakeholders who rely upon the Animas River for water supplies and they have ceased taking river water,” stated State Engineer Tom Blaine. “Despite the fact that EPA did not notify New Mexico directly and took no action to alert New Mexicans to the potential danger, we took steps to ensure the protection of our water users in the area.”

The pulse of contaminated water is expected to flow past Aztec, New Mexico at 3 a.m. Friday morning. Surface water diversions have been successfully halted.

“We notified public water systems to stop taking river water throughout the day and are confident they have been successfully shut down,” said New Mexico Environment Department Secretary Ryan Flynn. “We continue to ask the EPA for information about the spill and are alarmed that New Mexico was only notified a day after the event. The EPA had a responsibility to New Mexico water users to alert us immediately following the Gold King Mine spill which released 1 million gallons of contaminated water on Wednesday when the plume began flowing toward New Mexico. Despite EPA’s late notification with no constituent details, water systems, area farmers, the Navajo Nation, and others have all responded promptly and we will prevent contamination into our systems.”

New Mexico officials will continue to ask EPA for the exact constituents of the Gold King Mine Spill and will continue sampling and monitoring of water quality of the Animas River and area groundwater.

New Mexico Environment Department Secretary Ryan Flynn and New Mexico State Engineer Tom Blaine will be present in the Farmington and Aztec area tomorrow morning.

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